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Aruban artist shining in NY

Successful Second Art Expo For Elisa Lejuez in S ArtSpace Gallery New



Elisa next to the eye-catching new artwork Buddha 3D, part of the 18 piece art exhibition Pg 2

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Obama demands West stand firm against 'brute'

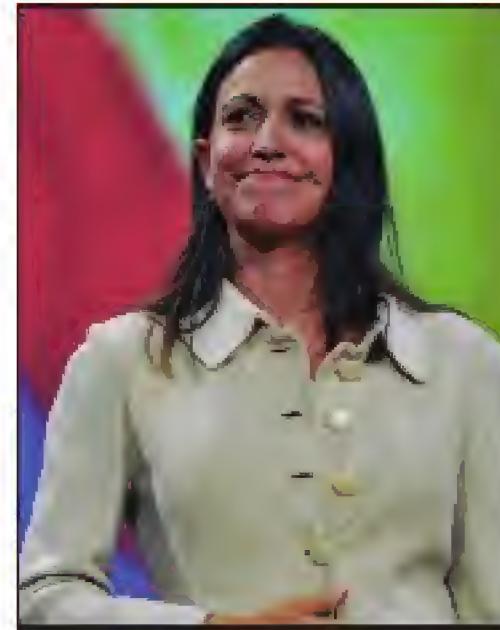
BRUSSELS (AFP) - US President Barack Obama urged the West on Wednesday to stand firm in opposing Moscow's takeover of Crimea, saying that "with time" Russians will realize "brute force" cannot win. Winding up a daylong visit that kicked off with a moving tour through the only Belgian World War I cemetery to hold US graves, Obama said "we must never forget that we are heirs to a struggle for freedom."

He told a crowd of some 2,000 people massed in a concert hall alongside Belgian's king and queen that Russia's actions had challenged "truths that only a few weeks ago seemed self-evident". The Kremlin's incursion into Crimea had violated the beliefs that international law matters, that borders cannot be redrawn, that people must decide their own future, Obama said before departing Brussels for Rome where he will meet Pope Francis.

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Successful Second Art Expo For Elisa Lejuez in S ArtSpace Gallery New York



Elisa Lejuez posing with art gallery owners Catherine Testorf (L), Elisabeth Rosso (R) and news anchor Marlie Hall (far L)



Robert Hurkmans, posing with Elisa Lejuez in front of the artwork *The Art of Painting* which he purchased

On Friday March 20 a solo art exhibition of Arubian artist Elisa Lejuez officially opened at the S ArtSpace Gallery in Soho, New York City. The collection, titled *We kiss the joy as it flies*, was strongly inspired by Zen teachings and the basic principles of Buddhism. This is the second solo art exhibition of Elisa Lejuez in the United States and a successful one, considering the turn-out on the opening night and the number of artworks already sold.

The well-attended opening attracted New York residents and fellow artists,

representatives of US-based media as well as the Aruba Tourism Authority. Lejuez's latest collection *We kiss the joy as it flies* expresses thoughts of finding balance in life, brought to us by the artist in bright and vibrant colors, making use of mixed media techniques.

An interview with Dutch Caribbean artist Elisa Lejuez during the opening reception and an impression of her *We kiss the joy as it flies* collection was recorded by television news station One Caribbean Television, that aired on RCN cable in Boston, New York City, DC

Metro Area, Chicago and Philadelphia as well as on 13 Caribbean islands, including Aruba. The interview can be viewed online here, or at www.onecaribbean-television.com.

Elisa Lejuez's art collection will be on display until April 2nd at the S ArtSpace Gallery on 345 Broome Street in Soho and at the Affordable Art Fair in New York City from April 3-6, 2014 at the Metropolitan Pavilion in Chelsea.

More information is available on www.sohotelartspace.com and www.elisalejuez.com.

A show of solidarity for a greener world to take place this Saturday for Earth Hour



ORANJESTAD -- This coming Saturday, March 29, Elmar, Aruba's distributor of electricity, invites all island residents and visitors to participate in the annual "Earth Hour," from 8:30 to 9:30 PM.

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A show of solidarity for a greener world... Cont. from pg 2

It engages a massive mainstream community on a broad range of environmental issues, initially begun as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia in 2007. Since then it has grown to engage more than 7000 cities and towns worldwide, and the one-hour event continues to remain the key driver of the now larger movement. Aruba will be participating for the fourth time.

To underline the importance of conserving our resources Minister of Education, Family Policy and Adult Education, Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar has sanctioned that air-conditioners, unused lights and other devices in schools will be turned off that day.

Elmar encourages all residents on Aruba to follow this example and switch off computers, televisions and other appliances in a show of solidarity, and consider their excessive use of energy consuming products.

A march through Oranjestad is being organized by Elmar to demonstrate Aruba's support for energy conservation and protection of the environment. Families and children are particularly encouraged to join in, with the youngsters costumed as their favorite superhero, tying into Earth Hour's 2014 theme, "Be a Superhero for the Planet."

Participates should gather in the parking lot of the Guillermo Trinidad stadium in Dakota at sunset, from

which the march will progress to the Vondellan, turning to the Linear Park along L.G. Smith Boulevard, and finish at Fort Zoutman. The procession should arrive at Fort Zoutman just before 8:30 PM, when the flood lights around the structure will be turned off for the following hour. Youngsters participating in the Aruba event will find Spider-man awaiting them at Fort Zoutman to pose for pictures and sign autographs, as the official Ambassador of Earth Hour 2014.

This was prompted by the stars of the soon-to-be-released "Amazing Spider-Man 2" movie, Andrew Garfield, Emma Stone, Jamie Foxx and Marc Webb having pledged to support an Earth Hour Blue crowd funding project each. Find out more about each of the individual projects "A Flame Called Hope," "Puppy Protectors," "Light up a Village," and "Power Up a Ranger," which confront several environmental issues, at this website <https://www.earthhour.org/spiderman>.

As nations will be observing Earth Hour within their own time zones, countries around the world will not go dark simultaneously, but space satellites will record a wave of darkness circling the built up areas of the globe. Elmar hopes this is a wave of awareness for preserving the planet and using energy resources wisely throughout the year.

By Rosalie Klein

Goal of San Nicolas becoming Aruba's second tourism capital is to draw at least 40% of visitors to San Nicolas



SAN NICOLAS -- Last Monday morning the government held a press conference at Baby Beach where different positive projects were announced for the San Nicolas area.

According to Minister Oduber, at the moment there is a huge investment being made for the improvement of the infrastructure of Baby Beach... some 1.6 million Florins. The financing is by the Fondo di Mejoracion di Producto Aruba (TPEF) (Fund for Improving Product Aruba). The government's objective is to make San Nicolas our second tourism capital, which reportedly, will contribute to the growth of our economy.

Minister Oduber praised his colleagues, Ministers Sievinger and de Meza, for their hard work.

The Minister went to add that already Works are being done in San Nicolas, such as beautification of the post office area, construction of the Carnival Village and the infrastructure of many barrios has been worked on, this way

elevating the quality not only for the tourist but also for the inhabitants of San Nicolas.

In early March the Minister and a group of 26 persons travelled to New Orleans to observe how that city developed into such a flourishing tourism destination.

A group of investors, financial institutions and busi-

ness owners made the trip to see the similarities and explore the potential for the development of San Nicolas, but, in our own way and style. Reportedly, studies have shown that our tourists desire to see more historical cultural

elements of Aruba with local artistry and San Nicolas is the perfect part of the island to meet with these requirements.

According to Otmar Oduber, the government's goal is to bring at least 40% of our visitors who come to Aruba to the San Nicolas area.



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Leatherback Season has started



Last Saturday afternoon a hugh sea turtle made her nest in front of Manchebo Beach Hotel. It is the first nest of the season. Normally sea turtles nest at night. They are scared by artificial lights, so we have to leave them in the dark and no flash photography is allowed.

But Saturday more than 100 people could witness the complete nesting process (about two hours). Turtugaruba (the local foundation that protects the sea turtles) informed the onlookers and placed barriers around the nest after the turtle had returned into the sea. The incubation of the eggs will take 60 – 70 days, so this first nest

will probably hatch at the end of May

The Leatherback Sea Turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) do not live in the Caribbean, but in the Northern part of the Atlantic Ocean. A female returns every 2 till 5 years to lay her eggs on the same beach where she herself was born. This female was nesting on Aruba before, in 2009 and 2011.

The two beautiful pictures of this Leatherback Sea Turtle were made by Armando Goedgedrag.

For more info: go to www.facebook.com/Turtugaruba or Turtle Hotline 592 9393

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“Broadband for Sustainable Development” video competition on May 17, 2014



The purpose of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) is to help raise awareness of the possibilities that the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies (ICT) can bring to societies and economies, as well as of ways to bridge the digital divide. May 17 marks the anniversary of the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention and the creation of the International Telecommunication Union.

This year, CANTO (Caribbean Association of National Telecommunication Organizations), headquartered in Trinidad & Tobago,

is organizing a video contest with as theme “Broadband for Sustainable Development.”

Submissions must short, no longer than 3 minutes, and containing the following:

- It is estimated that at the end of this decade mobile broadband subscription will reach 10 billion.
- Demonstrate three factors of How/What/Why Broadband is necessary for sustainable development and its impact on your life, community, region and the entire world.

Rules for registration and participation:

- Open to all students from ages 12-18
- Deadline for submission of video: May 2nd, 2014
- Complete registration forms on: <http://canto.org/competitions/wtisd-video-competition/>
- Submit the filled forms to tbalthazar@canto.org, write in the Subject box: CANTO WTISD Video Competition.
- Read first the complete list of rules, at: <http://canto.org/competitions/wtisd-video-competition/rules/>

Some points to take notice of:

1. Include complete name of participant in 'file name' before uploading video
2. The 'file name' number must be the same as the registration number on the WTISD form
3. 'Like' CANTO's Face book page
4. Upload the video via Face Book using a "private message"

World Telecommunication and Information Society Day
17 May 2014

BROADBAND FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

www.intelwtsd.com

WTISD

5. Watch for a confirmation of receiving the video and/or registration form within 24 hours of submission.

First prize is a roundtrip ticket for two to assist at the annual CABTO conference 2014 in the Bahamas, including hotel accommodations, a tablet and \$1,000. Second prize is a tablet plus \$500, third prize is a Smartphone plus \$250 and fourth prize is a smartphone.

For more information and rules, please contact Tricia Balthazar or Gail Edwards, 67 Picton St, Newtown, Port of Spain, Trinidad or tel: +1 (868) 622-3770 +1 (868) 622-3770/4781/5582/0929

Or visit CANTO's website <http://canto.org/competitions/wtisd-video-competition/>

Remember: all registration forms must be filled in and submitted to tbalthazar@canto.org before submitting the video.

Annual Fiesta Rotaria coming up this Sunday at a new venue



This year's grand prize: a Suzuki Grand Vitara

ORANJESTAD -- For over 30 years the annual Fiesta Rotaria has been the principal fundraising event of the Aruba chapter of Rotary International. It is a fun-filled day to find great bargains in the used book shop, the plant nursery, and flea markets featuring new clothing, furniture, building, electrical and plumbing supplies, as well as appliances, computer software and cell phone accessories. You name it, and it has likely been donated by some local vendor to raise funds for the many foundations Aruba's Rotary supports.

Traditionally, Fiesta Rotaria has been conducted in the land areas around the rotunda at the eastern end of L.G. Smith Boulevard in Oranjestad. However, Rotary members announced that this year it will be conducted in the parking lot of the Guillermo Trinidad Stadium, which is further inland, thus eliminating the usual traffic congestion on the main thoroughfare resulting from the event.

All of the entertaining elements of the Fiesta Rotaria are intact. There will be a full day of musical and dance performances on the main stage from several island groups. The Wheel of Fortune, Celebrity Dunk, featuring high-profile island personalities, a Kid's Corner with diverse games, rides and a Dino Jump as well as inexpensive lunches donated for sale by the Divi Culinary De-

partment and other vendors.

A large part of the Rotary fundraising depends on the sale of raffle tickets, which can already be purchased at Ling & Sons Supermarket on Saturday. Boolchand's, AMTR and Hoevertz Architectural offices. Interested parties can also register to purchase tickets online on the Fiesta Rotaria Facebook page, and they will be delivered to your door. Tickets are 25 Arubian florins each and can also be purchased on Sunday at the fair.

Grand prize this year is a Suzuki Grand Vitara 2014, and in ascending order: All-inclusive cruise pa 2 di Maduro Travel, Panasonic 50" Plasma TV di AMC Unicon, 2 tickets pa Hulanda cu KLM, iPhone 5S factory unlocked di Boolchand's, Gift Certificate di Afl 1,500.00 di Hagemeyer, Kompa Leon-Money Card di Afl 1,500.00 di CMB, Gift Certificate di Afl 1,500.00 di Kooyman, Gift Certificate di Afl 1,500.00 di Boolchand's y Gift Certificate di Afl 1,000.00 di Ling & Sons.

Fiesta Rotaria will take place from 10:00 AM until 6:00 PM, ending with some great entertainment and dancing with one of Aruba's top bands. All are invited to join the fun and help support the service club's important work for the betterment of the Aruban community.

By Rosalie Klein

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Loyal visitors honored at the Marriott Surf Club



Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring a group of loyal and friendly Visitors of Aruba, at the Marriott Surf Club as Distinguished Visitors. The symbolic honorary titles are presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 10 to 19 consecutive years. The honorees were Mr. Dave and Mrs. Sherrill Hamman from Fort Wayne Indiana, and Mr. Mark and Mrs. Sheila Davidson from Ankeny IA. The honorees are loyal members of the Marriott Surf Club and they love Aruba very much because of the friendly people, the climate, beaches, restaurants, and being on Aruba and staying at the Surf Club is like being home for them. The certificates were presented by Mr. Ernest Giel representing the Aruba Tourism Authority together with the Hamman family and Ms. Jenny Boekhoudt and Mr. Joop Bangma GM from the Marriott Surf Club.

Venezuelan politician heads home, risks arrest

CARACAS (AFP) - Opposition politician Maria Corina Machado dared Venezuela's leftist government to arrest her Wednesday, as President Nicolas Maduro's administration carried out a widening crackdown on protesters.

Machado was a lawmaker until Monday, when National Assembly head Diosdado Cabello kicked her out, stripped her of parliamentary immunity, and threatened to arrest her for going before the Organization of American States as a guest of Panama to try to talk about her country's crisis.

"Fiery with defiance, Machado -- who flew in from Peru Wednesday -- said that she was still a legislator "because that's what the Venezuelan people want, and I will continue doing it as long as Venezuela wants it."

"If the price that I have to pay so that our voice is heard around the world is this persecution and these threats ... I'll pay it once and a thousand times," Machado said at a

Caracas rally.

The government is cracking down on opponents after more than six weeks of street protests that have resulted in at least 34 dead and some 500 wounded.

Maduro and his government have been the target of protests fueled by public anger over soaring crime, hyperinflation and shortages of basic household goods.

- The exit strategy -

Machado, a 46-year-old engineer first elected in 2010, advocates an opposition strategy that seeks to generate pressure with street protests to force Maduro from power.

Former opposition mayor Leopoldo Lopez -- in a military jail for more than a month accused of instigating anti-government violence -- also supports the strategy, nicknamed "the way out."

Maduro says the protests are part of a coup plot led by the opposition in alliance with Washington and conservative Colombians.

Obama demands West stand firm against 'brute force'

Cont. from pg 1

In his only speech in a six-day tour of Europe, the US president said though the West was not directly affected by Russia's actions, "indifference would ignore the lessons that are written in the cemeteries of this continent".

Both Obama and NATO chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen called for a strengthening of the military alliance on the eastern fringe of Europe, where nations once under Soviet influence fear Moscow's intervention.

But both also spoke out in favour of a diplomatic solution.

"This is not another Cold War we're entering into," Obama said of the Ukraine crisis. "The United States and NATO do not seek any conflict with Russia."

But members of the transatlantic military alliance would uphold their "one-for-all" duty to defend each other's sovereignty.

"In that promise we will never waiver," Obama said. "NATO nations never stand alone."

- Troop movements -

Nervous over its assertive stance in Ukraine, at talks with Russia on Wednesday Georgia sought a fresh pledge that Moscow would not use force to resolve their simmering territorial conflict.

"Georgia remains committed to its non-use of force pledge unilaterally taken in 2010," said chief negotiator David Zalkaliani after the latest round of internationally-brokered peace talks in Geneva.

In Washington, US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said Russia has moved more troops closer to Ukraine's borders in recent days despite assurances it will not invade.

Defence analysts Jane's said Ukraine's maritime forces have been severely diminished by the Russian intervention in Crimea after they lost 12 of their 17 warships to Moscow.

Around 12,000 of the Ukrainian navy's 15,450 personnel were based in Crimea when Russia first intervened on February 27, and since then have lost the bulk of their assets, Jane's said in a commentary.



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Philippines, Muslim rebels set for historic peace deal

MANILA (AFP) - The biggest Muslim rebel group in the Philippines will sign a peace deal on Thursday aimed at ending four decades of deadly conflict that has condemned millions in the nation's far south to brutal poverty. The agreement between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and President Benigno Aquino's government envisages a new, southern autonomous region for the Philippines' Muslim minority with locally elected leaders by mid-2016.

Muslim rebels have been battling since the 1970s for independence or autonomy in the southern region of Mindanao, which they regard as their ancestral homeland.

US landslide town knew risks, officials insist

ARLINGTON (AFP) - The US town devastated by a monster mudslide that has claimed up to 24 lives so far was warned four years ago of the risk but residents felt safe anyway, officials said Wednesday.

As workers probed the disaster site for missing residents of Oso, Washington -- the small town buried Saturday under a square mile of earth and timber -- emergency preparedness officials defended their performance.

They pointed to a 2010 report commissioned after a major landslide in 2006 pinpointed the hillside overlooking Oso as among the most dangerous in terms of possible collapse.

Townspeople "knew the risk, but they felt safe in the small events," John Pennington, head of the Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management, told reporters.

"This wasn't a small event. It was large, it was very catastrophic," he added, at one point fighting back tears.

- Somber search for bodies -

Some 200 rescuers digging through the debris recovered two more bodies Tuesday and believe they located eight more, officials said.

On Wednesday, they said the official confirmed death toll remained at 16, as the other bodies found had not been extricated.

But the number of reports of people unaccounted for remained at 176.

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Dutch museum faces dilemma over Crimean artefacts

THE HAGUE (AFP) - Curators at an Amsterdam museum have been left with a political dilemma over priceless gold artefacts on loan from Crimea: do they go to Kiev or to Moscow once the exhibition ends?

The Allard Pierson Museum's exhibition began last month, before Russia annexed Crimea, and features objects discovered in tombs dating back to the seventh century on loan from five Ukrainian museums -- four of them in Crimea.

The absorption -- which is not recognised by Western states -- has left the museum with a "very complex legal issue," said Yasha Lange, spokeswoman for Amsterdam University which owns the museum.

"Who owns the objects?" Lange asked. "The art objects will remain in the Netherlands until the exhibition ends, but given the political changes, we're now checking to whom we should give them."

The Allard Pierson has now turned to the Dutch foreign ministry for an opinion, Lange said, adding the museum was in "constant contact" with Kiev and Moscow on the issue.



The exhibits include a scabbard and a ceremonial Scythian helmet made from gold, as well as a lacquered box, originally from China, which in Roman times found its way to Crimea via the Silk Road.

"The exhibition casts new light on the Scythians, Goths and Huns, for centuries dismissed as little more than 'barbarians,'" the museum said in a press release.

The exhibition ends on May 18.

Sweden jails neo-nazis for attack on anti-racism march

STOCKHOLM (AFP) - Three Swedish neo-nazis were handed prison sentences on Wednesday for attacking a peaceful anti-racism demonstration in a Stockholm suburb last December, a district court said.

Demonstrators including families with small children said they were attacked with bottles, stones, pepper spray and fire crackers while protesting against an uptick in swastika graffiti and nazi propaganda in the area.

The three convicted men are members of the Swedish Resistance Movement, a violent extreme right group

which openly supports nazi ideology and hails Adolf Hitler on its website.

Two of them, Emil Hagberg, 29, and Peter Jusztin, 24, have admitted to holding leadership positions in the organisation. Hagberg was sentenced to eight months in prison, while Jusztin and the third member received six-month sentences for possession of tear gas and violent rioting.

Five other neo-Nazis, including three minors, were given fines, youth community service or were taken into youth care.

The march, which had 500 to 800 protesters included several left-wing extremists, some of whom are also being investigated for violent rioting.

Around 30 members of the Swedish Resistance Movement, who claim that they acted in self defence, were arrested after the incident.

According to the prosecutor, the investigation is still open and more suspects are expected to be judged for the incident.

A mosque and two multi-cultural schools in Stockholm have since been emblazoned with swastikas and racist slogans.

Resignation of Germany's 'bling bishop'

VATICAN CITY (AFP) - Pope Francis has formally accepted the resignation of Germany's controversial bishop of Limburg, who had come under fire for his luxury lifestyle. Franz-Peter Tebartz-van Elst, nicknamed the "bling bishop" by the international media, had been indefinitely relieved of his clerical duties by Francis last year after details emerged of his high-roller lifestyle, said the Vatican Wednesday. The Roman Catholic bishop had faced outrage over an ostentatious building project at his official residence, which included a museum, conference halls, a chapel and private apartments, in the ancient town of Limburg in central Hesse state. The project was initially valued at 5.5 million euros (\$7.5 million) but the cost ballooned to 31 million euros, including a 783,000 euro garden and a 15,000 euro bathtub -- all using the revenue from a religious tax in Germany.



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Terror grips Ebola-hit west Africa

CONAKRY (AFP) - Guinea battled Wednesday to contain an Ebola epidemic threatening neighbouring countries as fear and confusion gripped communities under siege from one of the deadliest viruses known to mankind.

Aid organisations have sent dozens of workers to help the poverty-hit country combat a haemorrhagic fever outbreak which has claimed at least 63 victims, many of whom have been confirmed to have been infected by Ebola.

The British-based charity said people of Guinea's southern forests -- the epicentre of the outbreak which began in February -- had been terrified by seeing neighbours bleeding se-

verely as they were struck down by the virus.

Ebola had never spread among humans in west Africa before February but five deaths being investigated in Liberia, one in Sierra Leone and others still being tested could bring the total in the epidemic to above 70.

The tropical virus -- described in some health publications as a "molecular shark" -- causes severe fever and muscle pain, weakness, vomiting and diarrhoea, organs to shut down and unstoppable bleeding in severe cases.

Scientists have examined 45 samples from victims of the epidemic, with 19 testing positive for Ebola, the International Federation of

Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said in a statement.

Other highly-contagious tropical bugs, including Marburg and Lassa, can lead to similar symptoms but the authorities have not announced which pathogens were been picked up in samples where Ebola was not detected.

Sierra Leone warned on Tuesday that a 14-year-old buried recently may have been infected in Guinea, while the deaths of four women and a boy in Liberia are being tested for the killer virus.

Guinea has banned inhabitants of the south from eating bats, a common feature of the local diet, as the creatures are considered to be the natural host of the

virus.

Transmission of Ebola to humans can come from wild animals, direct contact from another human's blood, faeces or sweat, as well as sexual contact or the unprotected handling of contaminated corpses.

Doctors Without Borders, which is known by its French initials "MSF", said the spread of the disease was being exacerbated by people travelling to funerals in which mourners touch the dead person's body.

No treatment or vaccine is available, and the Zaire strain detected in Guinea -- first observed in the Democratic Republic of Congo 38 years ago -- has a 90 percent death rate.

E-cigarette use not linked to quitting smoking: study

WASHINGTON (AFP) - People who use electronic cigarettes do not report higher rates of quitting than regular cigarette smokers, according to a US study out.

The findings were based on survey answers from 949 smokers, reported in a research letter to the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Internal

Medicine.

Just over 13 percent of the people in the study reported quitting smoking within one year.

E-cigarette use "did not significantly predict quitting one year later," said the letter, written by three researchers at the University of California, San Francisco.

Among participants who



reported using both e-cigarettes and regular cigarettes, e-cigarette use was not associated with a change in cigarette

consumption, it added.

The fact that there were so few e-cigarette users in the study -- just 88, and nine of whom quit -- may have made any trends more difficult to spot, said the letter.

E-cigarettes deliver nicotine through a vapor, and are currently not regulated by health authorities in the United States.

Hospital infections kill 200 daily in US

WASHINGTON (AFP) - People who are hospitalized in the United States risk acquiring healthcare-associated infections, which kill 75,000 patients per year, US health authorities said Wednesday.

Many bacterial infections -- which can lead to serious complications from pneumonia and illnesses of the intestinal tract -- could be prevented if healthcare workers practiced common hygiene, said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The data, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, came from 183 US hospitals in 2011.

That year, the CDC survey found that about 721,800 infections occurred in 648,000 hospital patients.

Some 75,000 patients with healthcare-associated infections died during their hospitalizations.

The most common infections were pneumonia and surgical site infections (each at 22 percent), followed by gastrointestinal infections (17 percent), urinary tract infections (13 percent), and bloodstream infections (10 percent).

The germs causing these infections were *C. difficile* (12 percent), *Staphylococcus aureus*, including MRSA (11 percent), *Klebsiella* (10 percent), *E. coli* (9 percent), *Enterococcus* (9 percent), and *Pseudomonas* (7 percent).

Hospital infections with MRSA and *C. difficile* showed less substantive declines, at four percent and two percent respectively from 2011 to 2012.

The United States is "making progress in preventing healthcare-associated infections," said Patrick Conway, chief medical officer at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

He said the gains come from three main mechanisms, including financial incentives, performance measures and public reporting to improve transparency, and increased use of interventions that have proven effective.



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Obama agents sent home from Europe for boozing



WASHINGTON (AFP) - In a new embarrassment for the US Secret Service, three agents were sent home from Amsterdam for drunkenness, after one was found passed out in a hotel hallway.

The agents were in The Netherlands ahead of US President Barack Obama's trip there this week as part of the elite unit tasked with protecting the president in the event of an attack.

Secret Service spokesman Brian Leary confirmed to AFP Wednesday "three employees were sent home for disciplinary reasons," without giving any further details.

The story was first reported in the Washington Post newspaper, which said the agents have been placed on administrative leave, citing three unnamed people familiar with the case.

The incident comes two years after a scandal involving Secret Service agents and prostitutes in the Colombian Caribbean resort of Cartagena.

In the new case, the alleged behavior would violate Secret Service rules adopted after the Cartagena scandal, the Post reported.

Barack Obama's visit to the

Netherlands started with a brief stop at the Rijksmuseum, a fine-arts museum in Amsterdam, before he attended a nuclear security summit in The Hague and met fellow G7 leaders for talks on the Ukraine crisis.

Obama flew to Brussels on Tuesday for his first ever visit to the European Union's headquarters, and he is also due to visit Rome and The Vatican before heading to Saudi Arabia.

The Post said the three people sent home were members of the Secret Service's Counter Assault Team.

That unit goes into action if the president or his motorcade comes under attack -- they aim to fight off any attackers and draw fire while the president's protective detail removes him from the area.

The Post said hotel staff alerted the US embassy in the Netherlands after finding the unconscious agent Sunday morning, the day before Obama arrived in the country.

The embassy then alerted Secret Service managers on the presidential trip, which included the agency's director, Julia Pierson.

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Autism 'patchwork' begins during pregnancy: US study

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The brains of children with autism contain a built-in patchwork of defects, suggesting that the developmental disorder begins while they are growing in the womb, said a US study Wednesday.

Researchers described their findings in the New England Journal of Medicine as "direct evidence" of a prenatal origin for autism, which affects as many as one in 88 children in the United States

and has no known cure.

"Building a baby's brain during pregnancy involves creating a cortex that contains six layers," said co-author Eric Courchesne, professor of neurosciences and director of the Autism Center of Excellence at University of California, San Diego.

"We discovered focal patches of disrupted development of these cortical layers in the majority of children

with autism."

For the study, researchers dissected brain tissue from 11 children, aged two to 15, who had been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and who had died, most of them by drowning.

Looking for a specific set of 25 genes that had "robust, consistent, and specific expression patterns in the cortex," they compared them to brain samples from 11 children without autism, said the

study.

Researchers found that 91 percent of the autistic brains were lacking -- or showed an unusual pattern -- of the expected genetic markers in several layers of the cortex.

The signs of disorganization were found in patches across the different layers of the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain, the parts that are responsible for social function, communication, emotions and language.

"The most surprising finding was the similar early developmental pathology across nearly all of the autistic brains, especially given the diversity of symptoms in patients with autism, as well as the extremely complex genetics behind the disorder," said co-author Ed Lein of the Allen Institute for Brain Science in Seattle.

Researchers said they still don't understand why these changes come about in some children, apparently leading to autism, but not in others.

The patchwork nature of the defects does, however, provide a clue as to why autism can affect people in various degrees, from severe to mild disabilities.

It also may explain why some children respond to intensive therapy and become better communicators when identified early, since the brain may be able to rewire some connections to overcome the areas that are not working.

The same research team had previously found that the brains of children with autism were heavier than other children's, and that they had more neurons in the pre-frontal cortex.

The brains sampled for this study "represented nearly the entirety of tissue suitable for study at the Brain and Tissue Bank for Developmental Disorders at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the Harvard Brain Tissue Resource Center," said the article.

Still, the fact that only 11 were studied means that more research is necessary, said Andrew Adesman, chief of developmental and behavioral pediatrics at Steven & Alexandra Cohen Children's Medical Center of New York.

While some of the physical brain changes in autism were already known to science, the latest research provides a more detailed look at how this happens.

"This study is particularly important as it points to the potential role of several genes involved in the specification of distinct cortical layers during early brain development," said Patrick Hof, vice-chair of the Fishberg Department of Neuroscience, Friedman Brain Institute, and Seaver Autism Center at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

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Canada	CAD	1.77	1.79	1.61
Britain	GBP	2.80	2.85	2.99
Switzerland	CHF	191.71	192.43	202.48
Netherlands	EUR	238.59	232.69	248.09
Sweden	SEK	25.91	26.63	28.13
Denmark	DKK	30.23	30.95	33.47
Norway	NOK	30.67	31.39	30.03
Japan	JPY	214.38	216.84	175.64
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EU offers 2.5-bn-euro aid package for Latin America

BRUSSELS (AFP) - The European Union is to offer Latin America 2.5 billion euros (\$3.4 billion) in development aid over the next seven years to fund projects ranging from security to education.

The EU's Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs said "this aid package marks a new step in the way we work with Latin America, and sends a very strong signal of our commitment to continuing to support the region's development efforts."

The 2014-2020 funding includes assistance for regional programmes and bilateral schemes.

The aid will be focused on security, good governance and accountability, environmental projects and education and training programmes for the young.

A sub-regional programme for Central America is also included.

A total of 18 countries are eligible for the funding -- Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil,

Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Tech slump leads US stocks lower

NEW YORK (AFP) - US stocks Wednesday finished lower with technology names tumbling the most after the market snubbed a Facebook acquisition announcement and King Digital's first day of trade as a public company.

At the closing bell, the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 91.10 (0.59 percent) to 16,270.78.

The broad-based S&P 500 declined 12.99 (0.70 percent) to 1,852.63, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index sank 60.69 (1.43 percent) to 4,173.58.

Michael James, managing director of equity trading at Wedbush Securities, said some tech investors were skeptical after Facebook announced a \$2 billion deal to buy virtual reality company Oculus so soon after spending \$19 billion on WhatsApp.

Facebook shares fell 6.7 percent.

Investors also frowned on Candy Crush creator King Digital, which slumped 15.5 percent on its first day of trade after raising \$500 million in an IPO.

Airlines expect 'fair' debt repayment from Venezuela

SANTIAGO (AFP) - The head of the world's airline trade association said Wednesday he expects a "fair" debt repayment from Venezuela, which has racked up a massive deficit with leading air transport companies.

Tony Tyler, head of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), spoke at a regional conference about the "extraordinary situation" in Venezuela, "where almost \$3.8 billion in airline funds are being blocked by the government."

In Venezuela, airlines are required to sell tickets in bolivars under an arrangement in which the government later converts the local currency to dollars.

Said Tyler: "This is not the government's money -- it is

money the airlines earned by providing air transportation to the citizens of Venezuela. The situation has caused airlines to cut service."

Within the past year, Tyler said, 11 airlines operating in Venezuela "have reduced operations between 15 percent and 78 percent -- and a few have ceased flying altogether."

Airlines "are committed to serving the Venezuelan market but they cannot sustain operations if they can't get paid for the services they provide," Tyler said.

"While the Caracas government has made promises recently to allow the airlines to repatriate their funds, it is crucial the government now take the next step and release the airlines' money -- and that it do so at fair exchange

rates."

Tyler did not say what that rate should be.

In January, Venezuela announced that the dollar exchange rate for plane tickets would rise from 6.30 to 11.30 bolivars, making it difficult for airlines to calculate their debt.

Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro warned airlines in mid-March of "severe measures" if they reduced their operations.

"The company that leaves the country will not return while we hold power," Maduro said.

Meanwhile, he said his government is preparing an unspecified "formula" and a timeline to pay off the debt.

Tyler said he wanted to urgently work with the Venezuelan government to solve the problem.

Fed rejects 5 banks' capital plans, including Citigroup

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The Federal Reserve approved the capital plans of 25 major US banks after stress tests Wednesday, but turned down those of five others, including Citigroup's.

The Fed said four of the five -- Citi, HSBC North America, RBS Citizens Financial and Santander Holdings USA -- had "qualitative" shortfalls in their capital foundations, while the fifth, Zions Bancorp, had failed the

stress test with its basic capital ratio falling under the

minimum.

The objection means the five cannot move ahead with any increase in capital distributions -- dividend payments, share buybacks and other moves -- without strengthening their capital foundations to Fed standards.

These bank holding companies (BHCs) "are not permitted to implement their requested plans for increased capital distributions," the Fed said.

They "are required to resubmit their capital plans to

the Federal Reserve following substantial remediation of the issues that led to the objections."

But the Fed said the five are permitted to continue with existing capital distribution programs.

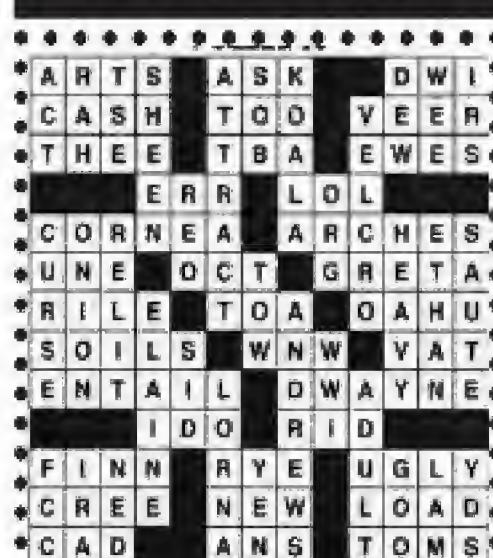
Of the five, Zions Bancorp was the only one to fail a stress test -- an examination to see how it would hold up under a severe economic crisis.

As announced last week, its basic capital strength fell below the five percent threshold in the test.



GUATEMALA CITY (AFP) Dense smoke billows from a fire at La Terminal market on Tuesday in Guatemala City. The disaster left four injured, 50 intoxicated and at least 400 stalls destroyed.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer



COMICS

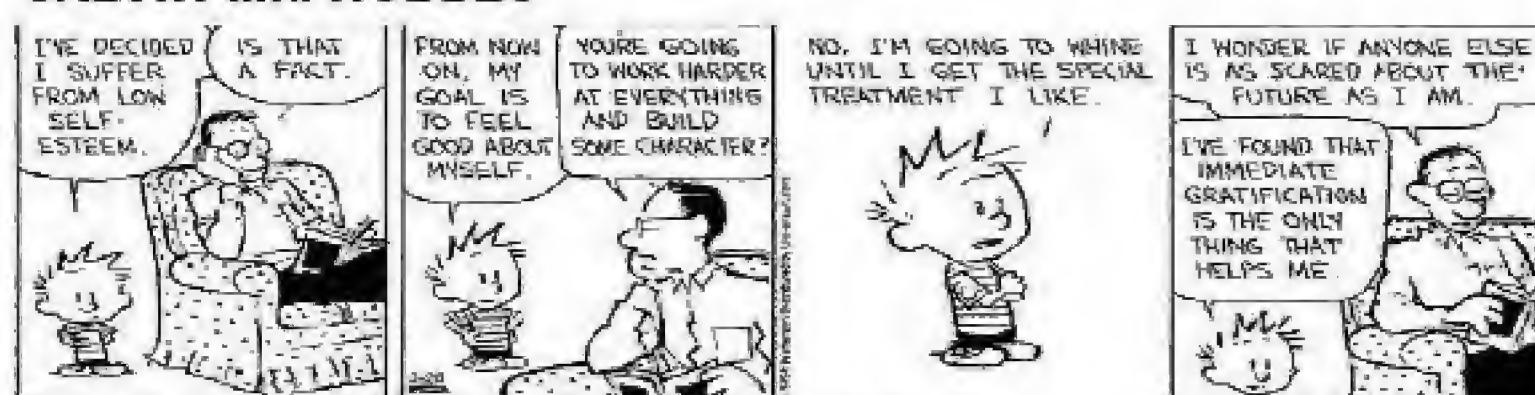
PICKLES



MOMMA



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ACROSS

1. Andrews, for one (abbr.)
 4. Wooden shoe
 8. Emeril's exclamation
 11. Islands (Fr.)
 13. Illustrious warrior
 14. Fuss
 15. Sword fight
 16. Receive wages
 17. Comprehend
 18. Paid off
 20. Boot camp residents (abbr.)
 22. Injure
 23. Gentle
 26. Miffed (3 wds.)
 30. Outrigger
 31. Disorderly crowd
 32. Biblical prophet
 34. Smog-watching agcy.
 35. PR ad
 37. Snarled up
 39. Bible king
 40. ___ king (2 wds.)
 41. ABC rival

43. Like a party dress, often
 46. Fashionable
 48. In the middle of
 50. Stole
 52. Have unpaid bills
 53. Control
 54. Sausage seasoner
 55. ___ Testament
 56. Matured
 57. Shark feature

DOWN

1. First-___ kit
 2. Bungle
 3. Root ___ float
 4. Fleet Street farewell
 5. Precede

6. Hockey great Bobby ___
 7. Flat bell
 8. Nursery furnishing
 9. Summer drink
 10. Country singer Bandy
 12. Becomes slender
 19. Stringed instrument
 21. "___ Loser" (2 wds.)
 24. Bounding gait
 25. Like a discharged battery
 26. Mischief-makers
 27. Nick Charles's wife

28. Teemed
 29. Explosive inits.
 30. Tex-Mex favorite
 33. Gave out an Emmy
 36. Baseball org.
 38. Epsom ___
 42. Actress Irene
 43. Nail ___
 44. Laze around
 45. Berra or Bear
 46. Meadow sound
 47. Harry Potter's pet
 49. Nondrinkable Starbucks merchandise
 51. Boxer Norton

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Sudoku

2			3			6		
3		1	5			4		
			2			8	1	
	5				3		6	
1						3		
4			6			5		
5	9				1			
		8			6	9		4
		7			4		8	

SOLUTION

6	1	5	9	8	6	4	2	7
4	2	6	9	5	7	8	3	1
7	9	8	1	2	3	6	5	4
5	6	9	2	8	4	3	7	1
3	8	7	2	5	6	9	1	8
9	4	6	3	1	7	8	2	5
1	9	3	5	2	4	7	6	9
8	5	2	6	4	9	3	8	7
7	6	1	8	9	5	2	4	3

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
 A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
 In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9

Jagger mourns girlfriend Scott at private LA funeral

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - A grieving Mick Jagger bid farewell Tuesday to his fashion designer girlfriend L'Wren Scott, in a private funeral with family and celebrity friends a week after she killed herself.

Nicole Kidman, her husband musician Keith Urban and rocker Bryan Adams were among guests for the cremation service at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery in Los Angeles, media reports said.

Former Eurythmics star Dave Stewart played guitar for a rendition of gospel hymn "Will the Circle be Unbroken," sung by veteran Rolling Stones backing singer Bernard Fowler, said the Rolling Stones frontman's spokesman.

Jagger, 70, who flew to Los Angeles to be close to his daughters last week after postponing a Stones tour of Australia and New Zealand, arrived in a blacked-out SUV at the cemetery, closed for the day.

The roughly hour-long service with blessings and prayers included "memories and words of tribute" from Jagger and Scott's brother Randy Bambrough, he said in a statement.

Also there were talent agent Justinian Kfoury, costume designer Ira M. Ham-



Mick Jagger and children James Jagger, Gabriel Jagger, and Georgia May Jagger are seen on the balcony of his hotel suite in Beverly Hills.

mons-Glass and Adam Glassman, creative director of Oprah Winfrey's magazine O, the Oprah Magazine.

Poems were read by Jagger's daughter Karis, as well as actress Ellen Barkin. Another daughter, Jade, read Psalm 139, and the rocker's grandchildren, Mazie and Zak, read Psalm 23 -- "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing."

Karis lives in Los Angeles, while Jagger's other daughters Elizabeth and Georgia May have also been staying in town to comfort him, according to media reports.

The service was held amid tight security at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery, the final resting place to generations of celebrities including

Jayne Mansfield, Cecil B DeMille, Rudolph Valentino and Douglas Fairbanks.

Jagger had been with Scott for 13 years. The model-turned-fashion designer was 49. Last Wednesday a coroner confirmed that Scott had hanged herself.

The 70-year-old singer has not been seen in public since hearing the tragic news, but in a blog post on his website a day after Scott was found dead he described her as not only his lover but his best friend.

"I am still struggling to understand how my lover and best friend could end her life in this tragic way," he wrote under a post entitled "L'Wren", featuring a black and white photo of Scott.

Candy Crush maker King in \$500 mn Wall Street debut

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) - King Digital Entertainment raised a sweet half-billion dollars on Wall Street, and now it is time for the market to show its taste for the makers of mobile game Candy Crush. The British game developer priced its initial public offering at \$22.50 per share on the eve of the start of public trading Wednesday on the New York Stock Exchange. King will trade under the ticker "KING" with an opening market valuation of \$7.1 billion. The money raised in the issue could reach \$574 million depending on demand for an additional 3.33 million that could be issued underwriters, the company said. King's arrival on the stock market comes as investors are keen to buy into the next Internet rising industry star but wary of young companies being overvalued, especially in the world of games where popularity can be fleeting. Established in 2002, King's business has soared in the last two years thanks to the spectacular popularity of Candy Crush Saga, which boasts some 97 million players worldwide. The Tetris-like format requires players to line up sweets and bon bons through 500 increasingly difficult levels.



The original (bill) would have nullified the existing exemption, preventing officers from enforcing prostitution laws," the Honolulu Police Department said in a statement cited by local KITV television.

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Hawaiian police defend right to sex with prostitutes



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Hawaiian police are facing a storm of criticism by fighting to protect a right for undercover officers to have sex with prostitutes if it can help an investigation.

Lawmakers debated the issue in the state Senate in Honolulu last week, as part of a bill cracking down on prostitution in which police have tried to re-instate an exemption letting officers have sex with prostitutes.

Critics on the US Pacific island state say the demand is part of an outdated concept of prostitution, and increases the risk of police abuse of their position to demand sexual favors.

But police say they sometimes have to maintain the pretense that they are genuine clients to avoid jeopardizing investigations, which would be a risk if a prostitute knew they were police officers.

"The original (bill) would have nullified the existing exemption, preventing officers from enforcing prostitution laws," the Honolulu Police Department said in a statement cited by local KITV television.

"We are already subject to

'cop checking' where (prostitutes) do certain acts or attempt to do certain acts to determine whether the person is an undercover officer," Jerry Inouye of the department's vice squad told a committee meeting last month.

In the Senate, police are trying to reinstate a clause reading: "This section shall not apply to any member of a police department, a sheriff or a law enforcement officer acting in the course and scope of duties."

But Kathryn Xian, head of the Pacific Alliance to Stop Slavery, said the police were trying to defend an outdated attitude to prostitutes.

"We feel that the reason why this law is on the law books is because of age old, very archaic beliefs about prostitution being a victimless crime and there are no victims in prostitution," she told KITV.

Roger Young, a retired FBI agent specializing in sex crimes, said Hawaii's exemption was difficult to defend.

"I don't know of any state or federal law that allows any law enforcement officer undercover to penetrate or do what this law is allowing," he said, cited by local media.



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Football: Guardiola can teach me to coach, says Maradona

BERLIN (AFP) - Diego Maradona admits he could learn a thing or two about coaching from Pep Guardiola after the Spaniard won the Bundesliga title in record time at Bayern Munich.

The 53-year-old Maradona told German magazine Sport Bild said he would like to watch Guardiola work at close quarters.

"I would like to spend a week working with Guardiola to watch him in training," said Maradona, who won the 1986 World Cup with Argentina and coached the south Americans at the 2010 tournament in South Africa.

"It would give me great pleasure to visit Bayern Munich."

Bayern's 3-1 win at Hertha Berlin on Tuesday saw Guardiola's side crowned German champions for the 24th time with a record seven games to spare.

After only nine months in charge, it is Guardiola's third title at Bayern after the UEFA



Super Cup and Club World Cup and the Spaniard's success is no surprise to his former Barcelona coach Johan Cruyff.

"I know Pep very well and I know how smart he is," ex-Dutch star Cruyff, 66, said in an interview with Munich newspapers Muenchner Merkur and TZ.

"It was clear to me that he didn't go to Bayern with the absolute intention of wanting to change everything. He's the sort who wants to have

everything working optimally and when it does, he just changes details.

"That's his gift: precisely why he's a good trainer is because he knows that anything good can always be improved."

Having won three European Cups with Ajax, Cruyff spent five years playing for Barcelona and then managed the Spanish giants for eight years until 1996, with Guardiola in his squad.

Cruyff's record of 11 trophies at Barcelona was only bettered by Guardiola's 14 trophies in four years as manager at the Camp Nou until 2012 before he took charge at Bayern.

Guardiola's immediate success at Bayern is no accident, according to Cruyff.

"He knew exactly what was expected of him and he had seven, eight months to prepare for working at the club and had, for example, learned German, which I find very important," said the Dutchman.

"That's typical Pep: he leaves nothing to chance."



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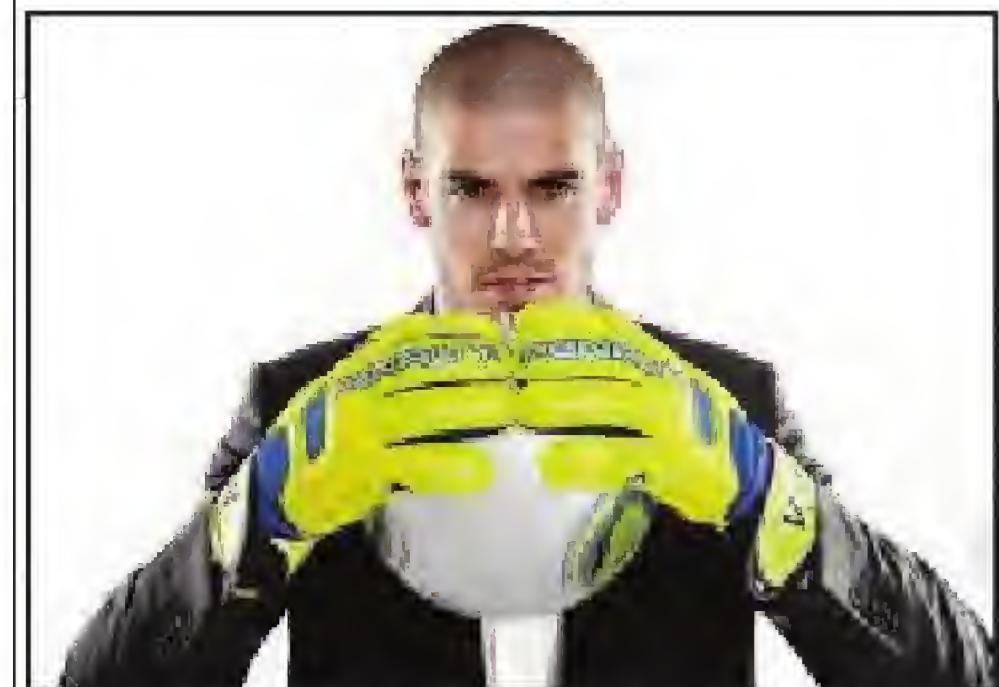
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Briefs:



MADRID (AFP) - Barcelona goalkeeper Victor Valdes was ruled out of the World Cup on Wednesday after suffering cruciate ligament damage in his right knee during his side's 3-0 win over Celta Vigo on Wednesday. The 32-year-old, who has signalled his indication to leave Barca at the end of the season, was seen crying as he left the field after just 23 minutes on a stretcher after jarring his knee whilst lunging towards the ball. Valdes will also miss Spain's defence of their World Cup title in Brazil later this year. Midfielder Andres Iniesta, meanwhile admitted it was difficult for the Barca players to concentrate on the game after the injury. Valdes has made the fourth highest number of appearances in Barca's history having been first-choice goalkeeper at the club since 2003. He has won six La Liga titles and three Champions Leagues in that time, but announced last year he would leave the Catalan capital at the end of the current season to seek a new challenge.



MIAMI (AFP) - World number two Novak Djokovic defeated Andy Murray 7-5, 6-3 on Wednesday to book his semi-final berth at the Miami ATP Masters. Djokovic recovered an early break in the second set to notch the victory in one hour and 29 minutes. It was the first meeting between the two since Murray defeated the Serbian in the Wimbledon final to become the first Briton since Fred Perry in 1936 to win the All England Club's men's singles title. Djokovic, going for back-to-back Masters titles after his triumph at Indian Wells, next faces either Swiss fifth seed Roger Federer or Japan's Kei Nishikori.

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Barracudas Synchronized Swimming club holds flexibility competition



ORANJESTAD - Last Saturday, the "Barracudas Synchronized Swimming Club of Aruba held an interesting flexibility competition. All swimming athletes were judged on their flexibility. Each athlete had to demonstrate a 3 'split,' which is the right foot, left foot and a center Split. Several athletes were able to sit fully flat on the ground.

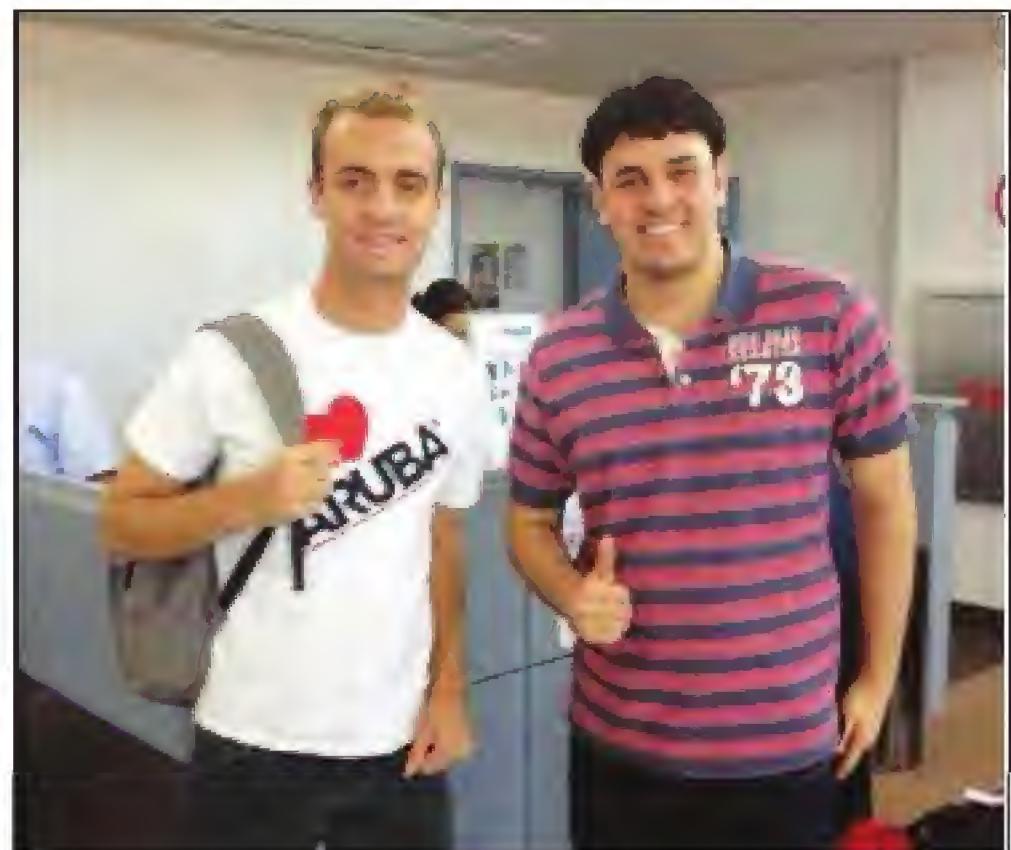
In each age group they were able to choose a winner with the best three splits. The winners were: Beginners: Andrea Pagliuca Pucci, 12 years and less; Sara Castano Vidal, 13-15 years; Barbara Gomez, 16-18 years; Neftaly Albertsz, Senior: Nikita Pablo.

For information about the Barracudas, contact Natascha de Veer at 593-0015 or Esther Croes at 593-0674 or email: barracudas1974@yahoo.com



"Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today."

Two top chess players off to American Sub Zonal Tournament



ORANJESTAD - The Aruba Chess Federation has issued a bulletin informing us that

on March 25th they sent two top young chess players to the American Sub Zonal 2.3.5 Open Tournament.

The players chosen are Master Jasel "Osh" Loez (19 years) and Mark Bueno (15 years).

This year the Sub Zonal Open will be held in Trinidad & Tobago from the 26th of March to the 2nd of April.

During the past years, Aruba has participated at various Sub Zonals. CM Osh has been a very strong player who scored 40% for the title of Candidate Master in the Sub Zonal played in the Bahamas.

Osh's talent and potential has been recognized on different occasion by FIDE who granted him a travel grant to participate in international tournaments (in 2011, 2012 twice and in 2013).

He travels this time again

with a travel grant from FIDE.

Mark Bueno is currently one of the top talents of Aruba. He demonstrated this during the past year and a half winning the Challengers in the International UMADA Cup Tournament (October). He came out in third place during the Festival Centro Americano Del Caribe in Costa Rica. Last month he became champion of the Chess Federation (February).

Last week he became sub-champion of the Copa Himno Y Bandera.

The Aruba Chess Federation has a lot of confidence in these two top players under 20 years of age and wishes them much success in Trinidad & Tobago.

Some 59 players from 10 countries are expected to participate.

To view scenes of the games you can link up to <http://www.chessresults.com/tmr128344.aspx?lan=1>



CMB

CARIBBEAN MERCANTILE BANK N.V.

For us, 2013 was as much a banner year as it was a year full of challenges. At Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V., we aimed to gather our strengths and to support our customers. Our results are a reflection of our people, those same people that are as much our customers as they are our employees, our shareholders, our community and social partners and our fellow citizens of Aruba, all of whom we are proud to share and celebrate our success with. With gratitude, we thank all of Aruba for doing business with us.

HIGHLIGHTS OF CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL POSITION

annual REPORT

2013

CARIBBEAN MERCANTILE BANK N.V.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS IN THOUSANDS OF ARUBAN FLORINS • 000s OMITTED

	2013	2012
Total Assets	1,556,325	1,433,796
Total Customer Deposits	1,113,968	1,191,481
Total Loans and Advances	1,036,719	927,141
Shareholders' Equity	208,822	159,724
Net Profit After Tax	55,540	49,330

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS IN PERCENTAGES (%)

Growth in Total Assets	8.55%
Growth in Total Customer Deposits	-6.51%
Growth in Loans and Advances	11.82%
Growth in Net Profit After Tax	12.60%

OTHER KEY DATA OF THE CMB GROUP

	2013	2012
Staff	291	290
Branches	6	7
Bancomatico ATMs	46	46
Client Accounts	200,569	191,055

INCOME STATEMENT

The income presented in our financial statements represents the total income for all 4 companies operating onshore and international businesses based in Aruba. International business and investment activities are a key source and contributor to the bank's consolidated income. Net Profits after tax in accordance with Central Bank of Aruba's guidelines were AFL. 56 million.

All business areas contributed to these results and the net result after tax grew in 2013 by 12.60%.

From CMB N.V.'s total revenues, 26% went to paying personnel expenses, 18% to paying other operating expenses, 16% to paying taxes, and 40% to net profit, hence an appropriate distribution among all stakeholders.

FINANCIAL POSITION

CMB N.V.'s consolidated total assets at the end of December 2013 totaled AFL. 1,556 million, for an increase of 8.55%.

Our customer deposits showed a decrease of 6.51%.

The total of loans and advances to customers increased by 11.82% over 2012.

At the end of December 2013, the book value of CMB N.V.'s Stockholders' Equity surpassed AFL. 208 million. As a result, CMB N.V. has a stronger capital base and is well positioned for the future. This solid capital base is a key strength that our communities and clients can depend on as we build for the future.

TAXES

CMB N.V. paid AFL. 19.8 million in profit taxes in 2013. This amount combined with employee wage and foreign exchange taxes resulted in CMB N.V. facilitating Land Aruba with amounts in excess of AFL. 38 million in 2013.

EMPLOYMENT

At the end of 2013, CMB N.V. directly employed 291 persons. During the year, CMB N.V. paid its employees total salaries and employee benefits amounting to AFL. 33.5 million.

COMMUNITY

CMB N.V. generously donated and financially sponsored over AFL. 750 thousand to neighborhood, religious and sports organizations and to institutions benefiting the youth. Not included in these monetary figures is the assistance given by our volunteer staff to the young and the elderly, in organizations and in homes for the aged.

LOANS

A considerable portion of our loans portfolio is managed by Retail Loans, a division that achieved significant results by offering attractive mortgage and consumer lending products.

DANKI!

Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V. wants to thank its customers, employees, directors, affiliates, The Bank of Nova Scotia, and shareholder, Maduro & Curiel's Bank N.V., for their patronage and support, thereby making the year 2013 a successful one. Pabien!

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